

Rabies Awareness

Chattanooga-Hamilton County
Health Department 2005

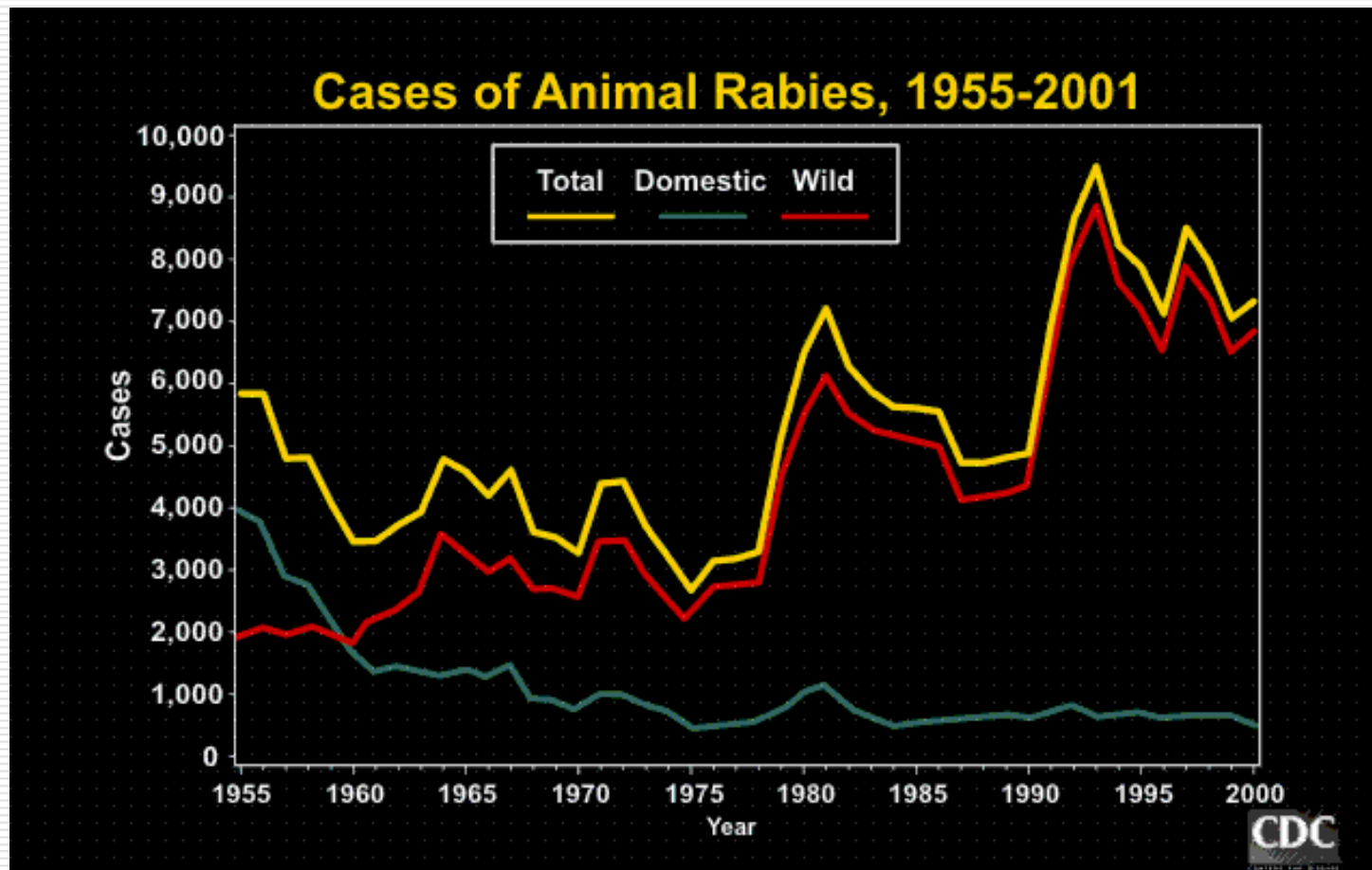
General Information

- ☐ Rabies is a viral disease that affects warm-blooded animals.
- ☐ It is most often transmitted through a bite from a rabid animal (via infected saliva or through mucus membranes).
- ☐ Rabies cannot be transmitted through blood, urine, or feces.

Carriers of Rabies

- ❑ In the U.S., most rabies cases occur in wild animals such as raccoons, skunks, bats, foxes, and coyotes.
- ❑ Domestic animals account for less than 10% of reported rabies cases.

Domestic animal rabies has dramatically declined because of mandatory vaccination laws for dogs and cats.

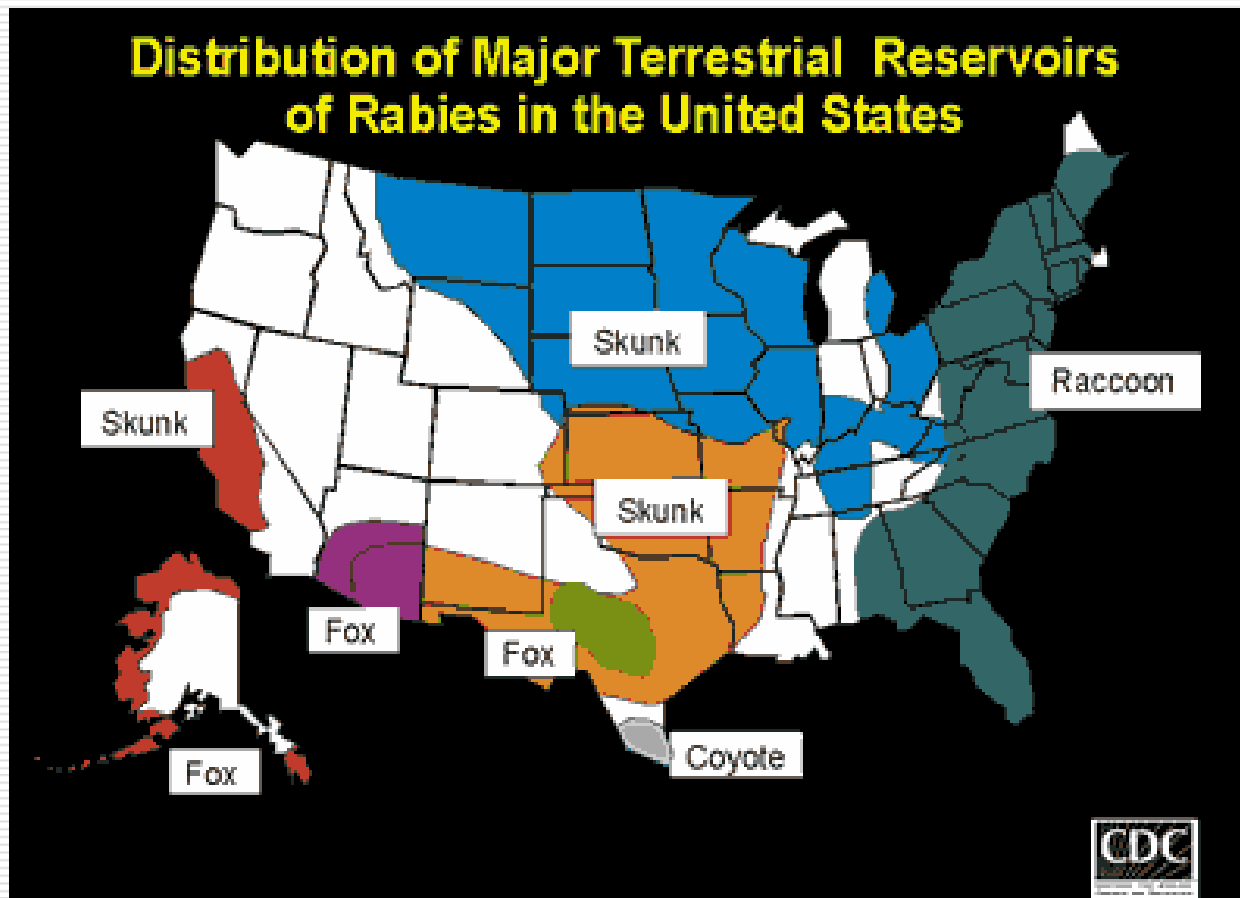


Chattanooga-Hamilton County
Health Department 2005

In the U.S.,

- ❑ There are 7,000-8,000 positive animals per year.
- ❑ There are four main strains of rabies virus: raccoon, skunk, bat, and fox.
- ❑ There are 2-5 human cases per year, mostly from bat exposures.

There is an increased threat of rabies in Hamilton County due to the progression of raccoon rabies strain into our area.



Possible Routes of Exposure

- ❑ A **bite or scratch** from a potentially rabid animal.
- ❑ If an **open wound** comes in contact with the saliva or central nervous system (CNS) tissue of a potentially rabid animal. CNS tissue includes the brain and spinal cord.
- ❑ If a **mucous membrane** (eyes, nose, mouth) comes in contact with the saliva or CNS tissue of a potentially rabid animal.
- ❑ **Bat exposure**, even in the absence of a demonstrable bite or scratch. Ex. When a bat has been observed in a room with a sleeping child or mentally impaired person.

Any potentially rabid animal that is not available for testing is presumed rabid.

What to do if you are exposed

- ☐ Wash the affected area with soap and water for at least 5 minutes.
- ☐ Seek medical attention immediately.
- ☐ Make sure tetanus immunization is up-to-date.
- ☐ Report exposure to Health Department as soon as possible.

Post exposure prophylaxis (PEP) may be needed:

- ☐ If the domestic dog, cat, or ferret appears ill or has unusual behavior.
OR
The exposure is from a bat, raccoon, fox, skunk, coyote, or other wild animal.
- ☐ AND, the animal tests positive for rabies or is unavailable for testing.

PEP consists of:

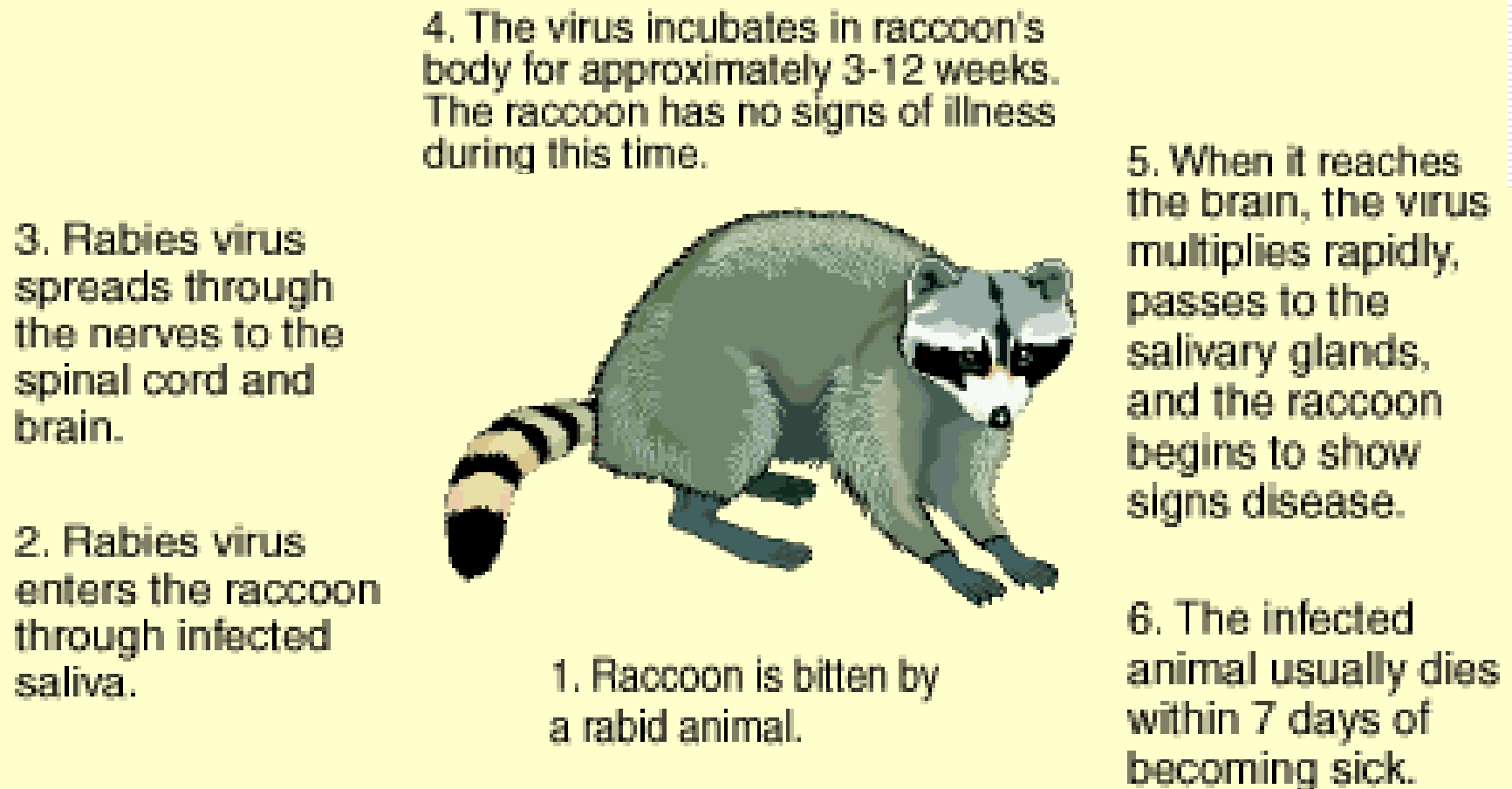
- ❑ A human rabies immune globulin (HRIG) shot on the day of exposure or soon thereafter.
- ❑ A series of 5 rabies vaccine shots.



Infection Process

- ❑ The rabies virus infects the central nervous system causing acute encephalitis.
- ❑ The outcome is almost always fatal if the patient does not receive PEP.

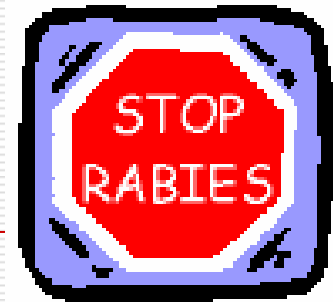
Figure 1. The infectious path of rabies virus



Source: CDC,

http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/rabies/natural_history/nathist.htm

Help prevent rabies



- ☐ Stay away from, and do not touch or feed wild animals.
- ☐ Be cautious of stray dogs and cats, especially those acting unusual or ill.
- ☐ Vaccinate your pets. Vaccinated pets provide a buffer zone of protection from wildlife rabies.

What is the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department doing?

- ☐ We provide rabies vaccine (pre-exposure) for people.
- ☐ We follow-up on all animal bite reports in Hamilton County.
- ☐ We educate the public about rabies.
- ☐ We coordinate rabies clinics.
- ☐ We have an environmentalist on call 24 hours a day.

We also participate in the state ORV program.

- ☐ This is a program to immunize wild raccoons for rabies.
- ☐ The oral rabies vaccine (ORV) is placed inside a bait of fishmeal and fish oil.
- ☐ The baits are distributed by hand and by aircraft throughout the county.
- ☐ When raccoons eat the bait, they ingest the oral rabies vaccine and become vaccinated.

Other Resources in Hamilton County:

- ☐ City of Chattanooga Neighborhood Services through its Animal Services
- ☐ Chattanooga Humane Educational Society
- ☐ Local Veterinarians
- ☐ USDA Wildlife Services
- ☐ Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency
- ☐ Tennessee Department of Health